

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-2 and 5-6 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claims 3-4 and 7-8 as follows:

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A method of outputting a database search information in a database system for retrieving records using a search key and retrieving records from a plurality of databases in a chain-reactive manner according to claim 1, the method comprising:

a step of retrieving a record by entering an initial search key into an initial database;

a step of retrieving a subsequent record by entering a subsequent search key, which is contained in the retrieved record and different from the initial search key, into a subsequent database different from the initial database in a chain-reactive manner from the initial database via a plurality of sequent databases to provide subsequently retrieved records as search results; and

a step of outputting, in the case that a first subsequent record retrieved from a first subsequent database on a chain-reactive search path does not contain a subsequent search key to be entered into a second subsequent database that is subsequently searched, information for identifying a first subsequent record that does not contain the subsequent search key and information for identifying the first subsequent database having the first subsequent record,

wherein in the step of retrieving subsequent records in a chain-reactive manner, information for identifying a group of search keys and a group of records retrieved through a series of retrieval processes in accordance with the search path is displayed in a matrix form using the databases and a group of the first search keys as indexes.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of outputting a database search information according to claim [[2]]3, in the case that the first subsequent record that does not contain a subsequent search key to be entered into a second subsequent database is

present among records retrieved from any intervening database other than the initial database and a pre-designated terminal database, the method further comprising:

a step of outputting the contents of the first subsequent record at the same time with said step of outputting information or in accordance with a specific operation,

wherein in the step of retrieving subsequent records in a chain-reactive manner, information for identifying a group of search keys and a group of records retrieved through a series of extraction processes in accordance with the search path is displayed in a matrix form using the databases and a group of the first search keys as indexes.

5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A program for causing a computer to carry out a method of outputting a database search information in a database system for retrieving records using a search key and retrieving records from a plurality of databases in a chain-reactive manner, comprising:

a module for retrieving a record by entering an initial search key into an initial database;

a module for retrieving a subsequent record by entering a subsequent search key, which is contained in the retrieved record and different from the initial search key, into a subsequent database different from the initial database in a chain-reactive manner from the initial database via a plurality of sequent databases to provide subsequently retrieved records as search results; and

a module for outputting, in the case that a first subsequent record retrieved from a first subsequent database on a chain-reactive search path does not contain a subsequent search key to be entered into a second subsequent database that is subsequently searched, information for identifying a first subsequent record that does not contain the subsequent search key and information for identifying the first subsequent database having the first subsequent record according to claim 5,

wherein in the module [[of]] for retrieving subsequent records in a chain-reactive manner, information for identifying a group of search keys and a group of records retrieved through a series of retrieval processes in accordance with the search

path is displayed in a matrix form using the databases and a group of the first search keys as indexes.

8. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim [[6]]5, in the case that the first subsequent record that does not contain a subsequent search key to be entered into a second subsequent database is present among records retrieved from any intervening database other than the initial database and a pre-designated terminal database, the program further comprising:

a module for outputting the contents of the first subsequent record at the same time with said module for outputting information or in accordance with a specific operation,

wherein in the module [[of]] for retrieving subsequent records in a chain-reactive manner, information for identifying a group of search keys and a group of records retrieved through a series of retrieval processes in accordance with the search path is displayed in a matrix form using the databases and a group of the first search keys as indexes.